

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
Thursday, May 4, 2006
DNR Service Center
1155 Pilgrim Rd., Plymouth

Draft Notes –prepared by Bill Horns

Attendance: Horns, Boronow, Peeters, Donofrio, Rebicek, Coffaro, Mangan, Hansen, Eggold, Meyers, Hogler, Binkowski (afternoon only).

1. Review/revise/cull agenda

2. Review/approve meeting notes from March 7, 2006

3. Brief updates

- Fin clip confusions (GLFC assignments, mix-up at Strawberry Creek)
 - Bill will compile fin clip info and send a letter to GLFC summarizing our fin clip needs
- OTC marking and SWG charge
 - Bill will send a letter to LMC (Jim Dexter) regarding the need to clarify the status of the OTC study, including marking and verification protocols.
 - Paul will summarize WDNR OTC marking and mark-verification practices in 2006.
- Lamprey hunters
 - Bill will forward lamprey hunter information to the LMFT.
- NRDA project writing
 - Mike Donofrio will send copies of three new NRDA proposals to Bill for inclusion in a summary for Mike Staggs.
- Upcoming LMFF meeting
- Adding names to LMFT “friends” list for notice of meetings
- Stocking quotas for 2007-08
 - LMFT will meet June 1 to develop a package of stocking requests.
 - Prior to that meeting Bill will discuss production constraints with Al Kaas.
- 1000 brook trout from Genoa NFH
 - Dick Rebicek will make arrangements to transport these fish to Sheboygan for stocking.
- 10,000 surplus 8” Wild Rose domestic yearlings
 - The LMFT supports stocking these fish at inland sites.

4. Chub gill net rule

Background. NRB Order FH-34-01 reduced the minimum depths for chub nets set during winter, but under a sunset clause the minimum depths are scheduled to increase on July 1, 2007. We have approval to develop a rule to postpone or eliminate the sunset date, but have not yet completed a review of the issue. If we are to advance a new rule, I would like to go to the NRB in September for approval of hearings in November.

Action. Discussion. We have no monitoring data since adoption of FH-34-01 about incidental mortality of lake trout in chub nets. Tom Hansen reported a drop in citations and stated that LE is comfortable with eliminating the sunset clause. The LMFT recommended eliminating the sunset clause. **Note:** The LMFT charge requires that any significant recommendation developed at one meeting be ratified at a subsequent meeting.

5. GLFC Science Transfer Program

Background. I recently circulated information about the GLFC's Science Transfer Program to the LMFT core group.

Action. Discussion. Two suggestions were 1) use the program to support within-state efforts like the LMFF and 2) use the program to support "Lamprey Hunters".

6. Supplemental FY07 funding

Background. In March the FH Board agreed to provide additional funding for Lake Michigan projects in FY07. One new project was "KMSFH Scoping and Feral Broodstock Data". The project summary for that project has two elements: 1) Develop management information for a Scope of Work document to be prepared in support of renovation of Kettle Moraine SFH. 2) Develop a systematic review of all phases of feral brood stock management in Lake Michigan (all salmonine species). This would involve synthesizing field, weir, and hatchery reports into a single annual report that captures both measures of success (e.g., creel data, weir returns, size-at-age, maintenance of summer and fall-run steelhead strains) and indices of factors we control (e.g., size-at-stocking, smoltification status at stocking, hatchery variables, weir selection variables). This will allow us over time to systematically explore how the factors we control influence the outcomes we want.

Action. Abbreviated discussion.

7. Steelhead planning

Background. Steve Hogler recently circulated copies of two reports to the LMFT core group, one on the nearshore rainbow trout stocking experiment and the other on returns to BAFF. Those will provide a basis for discussion of the several questions. Regarding nearshore rainbows: 1) Do we want to continue one or both strains? 2) Do we want to create a brood stock of either? Regarding steelhead: 1) Which strain of nearshore rainbows do we prefer for the future? 2) How many eggs should be taken this spring? 3) How do we fix the long-term problem? 4) Do we want to continue to produce three strains of steelhead? 5) Should we set a 194,000 fish production goal until a long-term solution is found to the hatcheries water problems? In addition to those questions, which we came up with at an earlier meeting, I would like to add a sixth: 6) Can and should we attempt to assess one or more of the possible factors influencing steelhead returns in a field study over the next several years.

Action. Discussion. In light of capacity problems at KMSFH and other considerations the LMFT recommended 1) that stocking of the Kamloops strain be discontinued, 2) that no steps be taken to create a captive or feral brood stock of either nearshore strain, 3) that we continue to stock 60K to 120K Arlees as long as possible using the present egg source, and 4) that apart from starting Arlee eggs, no nearshore rainbows be reared at KMSFH. **Note:** The LMFT charge requires that any significant recommendation developed at one meeting be ratified at a subsequent meeting.

8. Smallmouth bass rules

Background. Spring hearing results are available on the DNR web page. Three advisory questions (61, 62, and 63) pertained to smallmouth bass in Green Bay and Lake Michigan. The votes on those are summarized in the table. In addition, another rule proposal was raised at the Door County meeting.

	<i>Statewide</i>		<i>Door County</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
61. Closed season in May and June?	2206	1163	23	47
62. Catch and release in May and June?	1163	2043	22	48
63. Reduce daily bag from 5 to 3	1965	1328	37	33

Action. Discussion.

9. Perch quotas for 2007

Background. If the yellow perch recovery in Green Bay continues and if the 2005 year class pans out in Lake Michigan, we can expect to be pressured to increase commercial quotas in Green Bay and to re-open commercial fishing for yellow perch in Lake Michigan. The Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan calls for exploring ways to automate the setting of commercial harvest limits (Tactic III.A.1.d). I have suggested pegging the total allowable commercial harvests to creel results in the previous year, and I would like to raise that again for discussion, but there may be better alternative ways to automate quota-setting. I would like to initiate a pink sheet ("Rule Agenda/Board Action Checklist") stating the intent to develop a rule that would automate the setting of yellow perch harvest limits. Approval of such a pink sheet by Staggs, Ambs, and Hassett would allow rule development to proceed. By starting now, we would then have time to examine and discuss competing methodologies before advancing a specific rule proposal.

Action. The LMFT endorsed initiation of a pink sheet as described above. **Note:** The LMFT charge requires that any significant recommendation developed at one meeting be ratified at a subsequent meeting.

10. Cormorant control/management/research

Background. Paul Peeters will be prepared to discuss 1) the control/management/research plan for 2006, 2) activities in other states, 3) data suggesting a link between cormorants and brown trout, and 4) a possible harassment program on the Kewaunee River to protect newly stocked salmon and trout. If any new modeling results are available, Matt Mangan can summarize those.

Action. Discussion

11. WEPCO restoration plan.

Background. I recently forwarded to LMFT core members a copy of a restoration plan prepared by WEPCO to compensate for damages associated with the Oak Creek/Elm Road facility. Brad Eggold urges everyone to read this prior to our meeting.

Action. Discussion. Brad will draft a response regarding the draft restoration plan. The comments will be circulated to the LMFT for comments (be ready to respond on short notice) before being sent to Joyce/Schuettpeiz.

12. Spotted musky restoration

Background. The importation of musky eggs from Ontario was cancelled at the last minute owing to concerns about VHS (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia).

Action. No discussion.

13. Commercial fishing re-write

Background. AB 581 is law. Now NR 25 must be re-written to implement the new statutory authority.

Action. Discussion. Tom Hansen promised to circulate drafts of changes to NR 25. He noted that this rule making could be a vehicle for other commercial rule changes. Hearings will be in August or September.

14. Lake trout restoration plan

Background. After much delay, the LMC has set a new deadline of June 1 for submission of state comments on the draft lake trout restoration plan. I will draft a letter expressing WDNR views. It will reflect past LMFT discussions.

Action. No discussion. The draft letter was circulated for comment and will be e-mailed to LMFT members not in attendance. Comments to Bill are needed by May 18. It will be reviewed and approved by Hewett and Staggs before mailing to LMC Chairman Jim Dexter.

15. Fishing tournaments

Background. The statewide tournament committee has discussed the possibility of creating a \$10 “tournament stamp” to be issued to all tournament fishers. Tim Kroeff suggests the fee might be excessive for GL trout and salmon tournaments in that we already have a stamp requirement and the fishery is put and take. Pat Schmalz has asked for comments by May 8th.

Action. Discussion. Bill will contact Pat regarding LMFT these LMFT concerns: 1) The requirement of a stamp for GL salmon and trout tournaments would discourage participation without benefit to tournaments or participants. 2) Enforcement would be problematic. 3) We already require a stamp for fishing on the Great Lakes.

16. Next meeting date and location – June 1, 9 am to 3 pm, Plymouth Service Center.